DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 400 594 EA 027 869

AUTHOR Harwood, Richard C.; And Others
TITLE Meaningful Chaos: How People Form Relationships with Public Concerns. A Report.
INSTITUTION Harwood Group, Bethesda, MD.
SPONS AGENCY Charles F. Kettering Foundation, Dayton, Ohio.
PUB DATE 93
NOTE 51p.
AVAILABLE FROM Kettering Foundation, Order Dept., P.O. Box 41626, Dayton, OH 45441 ($3).
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143)

EDRS PRICE Document Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS *Citizen Participation; Citizenship Responsibility; *Political Attitudes; Political Issues; Public Affairs Education; *Public Opinion; *Public Policy; *Social Attitudes

ABSTRACT

The formation of authentic public opinion requires confrontation with political realities and open discussion. This report presents findings of a study, conducted by The Harwood Group, that sought to describe the nature of the process through which citizens learn about public concerns and engage in them. The report argues that the seemingly chaotic process of forming opinions is actually one composed of meaningful patterns and principles. Data were derived from focus-group discussions with 6 groups representing a cross-section of American citizens, interviews with 13 experts, and a literature review. The study identified nine factors that play a pivotal role in citizens' involvement in public affairs: (1) a desire to make connections between public concerns; (2) personal context; (3) a desire for coherence; (4) a need for areas of ambivalence in the public arena; (5) emotion; (6) a desire for authenticity; (7) a desire to play a role in facilitating change; (8) individual catalysts in everyday life; and (9) mediating institutions that bring people together. (LMI)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****